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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: OIL COMPANY SECURITY

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador Jeter, Consul General and CG Lagos staff met EXXON/MOBIL, Halliburton and ChevronTexaco Managing Directors on May 27 to encourage more timely notification of the Mission in the event of hostage-takings, occupation of facilities, or interruption of oil company operations. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) During a meeting hosted at Embassy request by the ChevronTexaco Managing Director Jay Pryor, Ambassador Jeter expressed concern about the lack of timely Embassy notification of security crises in which American citizens and oil production facilities are involved. Most recently, the Transocean rig takeover in April 2003 was not reported to Post until almost one week after the crisis began. Ambassador Jeter told the representatives that the Mission could be helpful in resolving future crises just as it was helpful in enlisting National Labour Congress President Adams Oshiomole to end the Transocean platform occupations and hostage-takings. He noted that the Embassy could also engage the Government of Nigeria (GON) at the highest levels including the President, National Security Advisor, State Security Service and others, as it did during the Transocean crisis. In that instance, Embassy intervention may have preempted plans to use military force that might have proved dangerous for the hostages. Post also kept Washington and other official players well informed with up-to-the-minute analysis of the situation.

3. (SBU) Company representatives expressed reluctance to share immediate information with Post, fearing that the Freedom of Information Act (FIA) requirements might require the release of the information to others, including the media. They pointed out that the immediate aftermath of an incident was a critical negotiating period when publicity could prove harmful. Unless serious injury is imminent, companies prefer to negotiate without Embassy intervention unless intervention could be discreet. The companies would be willing to be more forthcoming with information if given assurances that the USG would not release information into the public domain.

4. (SBU) Despite their reservations about confidentiality, the companies want to maintain

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frequent contact with the Mission on security matters. All agreed that meetings to discuss security issues at the level of the Ambassador and Managing Directors should be held every two months. In addition, there are regularly scheduled OSAC meetings for company security directors, which are fully endorsed and supported by company Managing Directors. The next such meeting is scheduled for June 10. Finally, company representatives were encouraged to engage the re-elected Obasanjo Administration on problems in the Niger Delta, particularly on security and the breakdown of law and order, which have accelerated in recent months. The three companies agreed that due to this increase in crime, conducting business in safety and security has become more precarious and difficult.

5. (SBU) The Embassy will be looking at ways in which oil and oil service companies and the Mission can exchange information in real time. It was agreed that information received in a timely manner is the only way to maintain the appropriate level of security. It also was agreed that future meetings should be expanded to include other major oil producers, such as Shell and Agip. Future meetings will focus on modalities for improving security for the oil community, Nigeria's law enforcement capabilities to combat rising crime levels, development of a Code of Conduct for local oil company employees, and the role

of the Embassy's Corporate Responsibility Officer.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The Managing Directors were very grateful for this meeting. Noting that this was the first time that the Embassy had taken such an initiative to systematically explore ways of improving oil company security. END COMMENT.

JETER